



Martin J. Chávez, Mayor

# City WellNews

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## Sun Safety & Saving Your Skin

Sun safety is a year round concern. Summer's arrival means it's time for trips to the pool, picnics and a spike in sunburns. But winter skiers and fall hikers need to be as wary of the sun's rays as swimmers do. People who work outdoors need to take precautions as well.

The need for sun safety has become even more clear over the past 20 years, as scientific studies show that excessive exposure to the sun can cause skin cancer. Harmful rays from the sun and tanning beds may also cause eye problems, weaken your immune system, and give you unsightly skin spots and wrinkles, or "leathery" skin.

Sun damage to your skin is caused by invisible ultraviolet (UV) radiation, which reaches us as long wavelengths known as UVA and short wavelengths known as UVB. UVB radiation can cause sunburn. But the longer wavelength UVA is dangerous too, as it can penetrate the skin and damage tissue at deeper levels.

Tanning is a sign of the skin reacting to potentially damaging UV radiation by producing additional pigmentation that provides it with some, though not nearly enough, protection against sunburn.

No matter what our skin tone, we're all potential victims of sunburn and the other detrimental effects of excessive exposure to UV radiation. Although we all need to take precautions to protect our skin, those

who need to be especially careful in the sun are those who have pale skin, blonde, red or light brown hair, been treated for skin cancer, a family member who's had skin cancer.

**Be serious about Sunscreen:** Check product labels to make sure you get a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or more. SPF represents the degree to which a sunscreen can protect the skin from sunburn. The higher the number of SPF, the better you are protected.

## Tips for applying sunscreen

- Apply the recommended amount evenly to all uncovered skin, especially your lips, nose, ears, neck, hands, and feet.
- Check the label for the correct amount of time to apply it before you go out. If the label doesn't give a time, allow about 15 to 30 minutes.
- If you don't have much hair, apply sunscreen to the top of your head, or wear a hat.
- Reapply at least every two hours.
- Read the label to see how often you should apply.
- Give babies and children extra care in the sun.
- Ask a doctor before applying sunscreen to children under 6 months old.
- Apply sunscreen to children older than 6 months every time they go out.

## DID You Know....

- Melanoma is increasing at rates faster than any other cancer in some parts of the world.
- You can get a sunburn even on a cloudy day.
- On average, children get 3 times more exposure than adults.
- One blistering sunburn can double a child's lifetime risk of developing skin cancer.
- Concrete, sand, water, and snow reflect 85 - 90% of the sun's UV rays.
- Depletion of Earth's ozone continues to increase your exposure to UV rays.
- More than 1.2 million new cases of skin cancer are diagnosed each year in the US.
- Melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, kills one person every hour.

Source: [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov) & [www.sunsafetyalliance.org](http://www.sunsafetyalliance.org)

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## Preventing Low Back Pain

Acute low back pain can be emotionally upsetting and physically uncomfortable. It can interfere with normal daily activities, job performance and sleep. Symptoms may include discomfort or pain in your lower back, limited flexibility, inability to stand straight or burning pain or numbness that moves down one leg.

According to the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases' handout on "Health: Back Pain," low back pain affects nearly 80 percent of adults at some time in their life. The pain may come on suddenly or gradually.

Low back pain is considered acute if it lasts for less than a few weeks. Poor muscle tone in the back and abdominal region, muscle tension or spasms, back sprains, ligament or muscle tears, or joint problems are common causes. Sometimes slipped disks can irritate nerves from the spinal cord, causing pain in the buttocks or legs, or numbness, tingling or weakness in the legs.

A visit to your doctor is a good idea if your symptoms are severe, you have pain after a fall or injury, or the problem does not go away within a few days. If, in addition to low back pain, you also have problems controlling your bowel or bladder, or you feel weakness or numbness in your legs, call your doctor immediately.

Following your visit, your doctor may recommend one or a combination of the following:

- Over-the-counter medications to help relieve your symptoms
- Prescription medications for severe symptoms
- Chiropractic therapy
- Applying hot or cold compresses to the affected area

In addition to discussing these treatment options, be sure to ask your doctor which activities you can do and which you should avoid.

Each person's situation is unique, so work closely with your doctor, and if your low back pain doesn't improve, call him or her again for further evaluation.

Source: CIGNA HealthCare Well-Being

## Steps You Can Take to Improve Quality of Life and Increase Longevity

Below is a summary of important steps you can take to improve the quality and length of your life.

- Eat a varied diet, rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat foods.
- Be especially careful to limit cholesterol intake and avoid saturated fats.
- Moderate exercise for 30 minutes five times a week, or vigorous exercise for 20 minutes three times a week.
- Protect yourself from the sun.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Drink at least eight 8-ounce glasses of water per day.
- Limit alcohol to two drinks per day.
- Don't smoke, and minimize your exposure to second-hand smoke.
- See your doctor regularly.
- Know your family history and discuss it with your doctor.
- If you are a male over 40, get a baseline PSA (prostate specific antigen) test and monitor this periodically with your doctor.
- If you are a female over 40, get a yearly mammogram screening.
- Practice safe sex.
- Wear a seatbelt whenever you're in the car, and a helmet when on a motorcycle or bicycle.
- Manage your stress.
- Get help if you need it.

As important as it is for you to take charge of your own health and wellness, you can't do it all. Getting regular checkups and age appropriate screenings is a proven way to improve health and reduce premature death and disability.

Source: [www.menshealthmonth.org](http://www.menshealthmonth.org)

## Understanding Allergies

Allergies affect more than 19 million U.S. workers each year. Allergy symptoms, like sneezing, nasal congestion and headache, may make it difficult to concentrate.

There are some simple things you can do to prevent allergies in your home.

- When working outdoors, wear a NIOSH approved face mask, hat, glasses, gloves and a long-sleeve shirt to reduce skin and nose contact with pollen.
- Since wood chips or mulch can retain moisture and encourage molds to grow, use gravel, oyster shell, or special plant groundcovers instead.
- Asking family members who don't have allergies to mow lawns and weed flower beds.
- Keep grass cut low, about 2 inches high, to help keep stems of pollen from reaching to high into the wind.
- Be cautious about using hedges since their branches easily collect dust, mold and pollen, and keep them pruned and thin.
- Keep the windows in the house closed while mowing and for a few hours afterwards.
- Limit your gardening days to cool or cloudy days, and in the later afternoon or evening when pollen concentration in the air is generally lower.
- Immediately shower and change your clothes when you go back indoors and make sure to wash your hair to remove allergens trapped there.

Source: <http://www.allergyactionplan.com/athome.html>

## June Wellness Tips

### Nutrition Tip

#### **Fatten up your greens, the healthy way.**

Toss avocado, olives or sunflower seeds into your salad for a healthy dose of mono- and polyunsaturated fats. These fats are known to lower levels of LDL ("bad") cholesterol, plus they digest more slowly, prolonging satisfaction.

### Fitness Tip

**Stretch out you're A.M. routine.** To stimulate blood flow again when you wake up, stretch your spine before you get out of bed. Carefully roll onto your hands and knees (wrists directly under shoulders and knees at a 90-degree angle) and alternately arch and round your back. On the arch, push your sit bones away from your back and extend your head straight out in front as if you are trying to touch your headboard with the top of your head. On the round, round your back up while bringing your chin to your chest.

### Health Tip

**Identify your top health saboteur.** Vow to conquer your worst health habit. If you aren't sure, ask your significant other, a family member or a friend. Once you have pinpointed your biggest challenge, research ways to kick the habit.

## Mayor's Monthly Green Tip

If you're planning a cookout, look for all-natural, sustainably produced charcoal or wood briquettes for your grill.

- Even better, "fire up" an electric grill.
- Serve locally grown foods, snacks and drinks with minimal packaging.
- Bring cloth napkins, and reusable dishes and utensils.
- If you want to take in fireworks, see if there are any displays in walking distance, or else bike, take public transportation, or carpool.
- Don't forget to protect yourself with petrochemical-free sunblock and natural insect repellents.

Source: <http://nationalzoo.si.edu/Publications/>

## Tips For Men's Health

- Get your prostate checked yearly after age 40.
- Eat right. Studies show that people who eat a high fat diet have a greater risk of developing prostate cancer. On the other hand, fiber, soy protein, fruits, and cooked tomatoes have all been shown to reduce risk.
- Watch your weight. Obesity may be a contributing factor to a number of cancers, including prostate.
- Exercise regularly.
- Don't smoke.
- Limit alcohol and avoid caffeine.
- Drink a lot of water. This can help flush out your bladder. Urine should be almost clear.
- Consult your doctor about other prevention tips.

Source: [www.menshealthmonth.org](http://www.menshealthmonth.org)

## Are there topics you would like us to discuss in City WellNews?

**Contact:**  
**JD Maes**  
**jmaes@cabq.gov 768-2921**

## Questions about Insurance & Benefits?

**Contact:**  
**The Insurance & Benefits Office**  
**768-3758**

## Fruit of the Month



### Pluots©

Pluots are complex hybrid fruits that are part plum and part apricot in heritage. These fruits were originally invented in the late 20th century by Floyd Zaiger and are now grown in parts of Washington and California. Pluots have a majority of plum parentage and therefore, have smooth skin like plums. Some varieties of pluots are sometimes called interspecific plums, or dinosaur eggs. The pluot is often confused with the aprium which is another plum and apricot hybrid with mostly apricot heritage. Like apricots, apriums have slightly fuzzy skin. Pluots and apriums are known for their sweetness and flavor; the sugar content of these fruits is much higher than that of a plum or apricot alone.

**Recipe of the Month:** Confetti Pluot Pasta Salad  
Makes 8 servings

Each serving equals ½ cup of fruit or vegetables

### Ingredients

8 ounces corkscrew pasta  
½ medium red bell pepper, cut into strips  
¾ cup peeled and diced jicama  
½ cup chopped red onion  
8 pluots, sliced  
2 Tbsp diced pimento  
1 tsp finely grated fresh ginger  
3 Tbsp rice or white wine vinegar  
1 Tbsp vegetable oil  
1/8 tsp salt  
1/8 tsp freshly ground black

Cook the pasta according to the package directions. Drain. Rinse briefly under cold water and drain. In a large bowl, toss together the pasta, red and yellow bell peppers, jicama, onion, and pluots.

In a small bowl, whisk together all the basil, pimento, ginger, vinegar, oil, salt, and pepper until blended. Drizzle the dressing over the salad and toss evenly until coated.

Nutritional analysis per serving: Calories 216, Protein 6g, Fat 3g, Calories From Fat 14%, Cholesterol 0mg, Carbohydrates 42g, Fiber 4g, Sodium 43mg.

Source: [www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov)